

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A golf club shaft, comprising:

a tubular member of a prescribed longitudinal length, the tubular member having a butt end, a tip end, and a tapered portion therebetween, the tubular member further having a primary color provided along a majority of its length; and

- 5 a heat-transfer decal affixed to and circumferentially surrounding the tubular member, the decal having a length of at least 5% of the longitudinal length of the tubular member, the decal having a variable width profile, including a first width measured at a first location and a second width measured at a second location spaced apart from the first location, the first and second widths being between about 0% and 20% greater than the tubular member's outer circumference
10 at the corresponding location, wherein the decal comprises second, third and fourth colors, including a band of the second color extending laterally 360 degrees about the tubular member.

2. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 1, wherein the tubular member comprises a composite material having a plurality of layers of prepreg material.

3. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 1, wherein the first width is along a first end of the decal, and the second width is along a second lateral end of the decal, the decal is aligned such that the first end is toward the butt end of the tubular member and the second end is toward the tip end, and the first width is greater than the second width.

4. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 1, wherein the first width of the decal less than about 5% greater than the tubular member's outer circumference along the first width.

5. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 1, wherein the second width of the decal is less than about 5% greater than the tubular member's outer circumference along the second width.

6. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 1 wherein the decal comprises at least one color covering a majority of the surface area.

7. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 1, wherein the decal further comprises a fifth color.

8. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 1, wherein the band is located along an end of the decal.

9. A golf club, comprising:

a golf club shaft having

a tubular member of a prescribed longitudinal length, the tubular member having a butt end, a tip end, and a tapered portion therebetween, and

5 a heat-transfer decal affixed to and circumferentially surrounding the tubular member, the decal having a first width measured at a first location and a second width measured at a second location spaced apart from the first location, the first and second widths being between about 1% and 10% greater than the tubular member's outer circumference at the corresponding location, the decal providing identification,
10 decoration, or a combination thereof on the golf club shaft;

a golf club head attached to the shaft about the tip end; and

a golf club grip attached to the shaft about the butt end.

10. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 9, wherein a material of the shaft comprises a plurality of layers of prepreg material.

11. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 9, wherein the golf club head is a wood-type head having a volume greater than about 190 cc.

12. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 9, wherein the golf club head is an iron-type head having a loft angle greater than about 18 degrees.

13. A method of preparing a golf club shaft, comprising:

providing a tubular member formed of a composite material, the tubular member having a butt end and a tip end;

treating an outer surface of the tubular member to achieve a desired color;

5 providing a combination having a decal on a carrier material, the decal having a length less than a length of the tubular member, the decal having a first end and a second end, the first end having a first width that is between about 0% and 20% greater than an outer circumference of the tubular member at a corresponding location, the second end having a second width that is between about 0% and 20% greater than an outer circumference of the tubular member at a
10 corresponding location;

wrapping the combination about the tubular member nearer the butt end than the tip end such that the first end of the decal is toward the butt end and the second end of the decal is toward the tip end; and

heating the combination such that the decal transfers from the carrier material to the
15 tubular member and laterally covers the tubular member in a continuous fashion at least at the first and second ends.

14. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 13, further comprising aligning a lateral band provided at one of the first and second ends of the decal at a predetermined position on the tubular member prior to the wrapping and heating.

15. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 13, wherein the decal has a substantially trapezoidal shape as viewed on the carrier sheet, the decal having at least two colors.

16. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 13, wherein providing the decal comprises providing a sheet having a plurality of decals printed thereon, the sheet cut into a plurality of pieces each having one decal.

17. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 13, wherein providing the tubular member comprises selecting from a plurality of tubular members, the plurality of tubular members including variations in their flex characteristics.

18. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 13, further comprising providing a grip member on the butt end of the tubular member.

19. A golf club shaft as defined in claim 13, wherein the decal is provided comprising the first width being less than about 3% greater than the outer circumference of the tubular member

nearer the butt end, the second width being less than about 3% greater than the outer circumference of the tubular member nearer the tip end.

20. A golf club shaft, comprising:

a tubular member having a butt end and a tip end and a longitudinal length therebetween, said tubular member having a taper between said butt end and said tip end, said tubular member having a primary color provided from adjacent said tip end toward said butt end along a majority of said longitudinal length; and

a pattern on said tubular member having a length at least 5% of said longitudinal length of said tubular member, said pattern extending laterally around said tubular member and having a first end nearer said butt end with a first width measured circumferentially that is between about 0% and 20% greater than an outer circumference of said tubular member beneath said first end, said pattern having a second end nearer said tip end with a second width measured circumferentially that is between about 0% and 20% greater than an outer circumference of said tubular member beneath said second end, a band of a secondary color different from said primary color extending laterally 360 degrees and longitudinally at least 6.5 mm at a location between said first and second ends, said pattern comprising at least third and fourth colors different from said primary and secondary colors, a portion of said pattern between said first and second ends including said secondary color extending laterally 181 degrees or more and longitudinally at least 6.5 mm and said third and fourth colors located laterally in the remaining 179 degrees or less;

wherein said pattern laterally overlies said tubular member in a continuous fashion at least at said first and second ends, said pattern providing identification, decoration, or a combination thereof on said golf club shaft, said pattern affixed to said tubular member without adhesive.